

# Point of View

The views on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one depicted as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication

## TO BE EQUAL

# REFLECTIONS FROM LOS ANGELES

by John E. Jacob

While much has been written in the public print in regard to the social stability or instability in the city of Los Angeles during the recent trial of the four police officers that were accused of brutality beating Rodney King, not that much has been written about the life and the living conditions of the African American community in south central Los Angeles

in particular that famous area known as Watts.

It is also interesting now that much of the media attention has moved away from Los Angeles after the verdict was rendered with two of the police officers being found guilty of violating the rights of Rodney King and two of the officers being found not guilty. Yet, some of the fundamental problems that have

risen in South Central Los Angeles can be traced back to the aftermath of the 1965 Watts uprising.

The purpose of this reflection however is to share with you some of the reality of staying in the "Hood" during that critical week while we waited for the jury to announce the verdict. We stayed in Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs housing projects

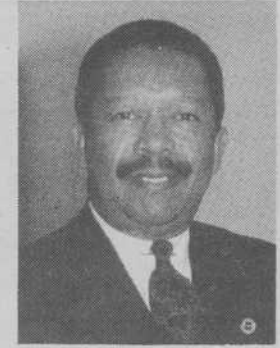
in South Central Los Angeles.

There is a racially discriminatory myth and stereotype about the character of persons who live in Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs. The myth is that residents of public housing projects are essentially lazy, non-trustworthy and violence prone. We found from firsthand observation that this myth is certainly untrue particularly in South

Central Los Angeles.

The truth is we found a profound sense of self-respect, self-reliance, and basic honesty as well as both individual and community integrity in the public housing projects of Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs located in the heart of the "Hood" in the Watts section of South Central Los Angeles. We witnessed women, men and children with limited financial resources working together for the common good of the community.

While thousands of soldiers from the California National Guard were in the process of being stationed strategically in certain areas of Los Angeles, tens of thousands of sisters and brothers were busy attempting to improve their overall quality of

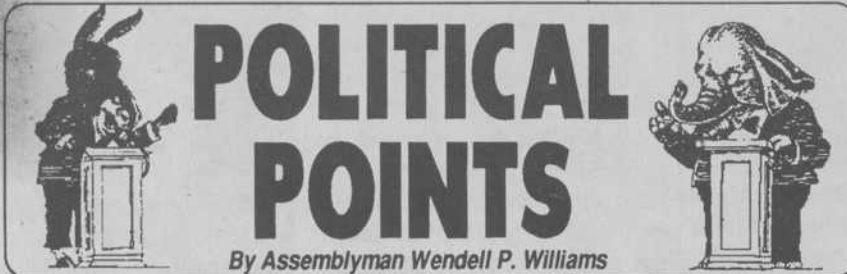


JOHN E. JACOB

life. Despite the popularized view, there was no one planning a riot. There was no one encouraging further violence. To the contrary of the orchestrated public opinion about Watts and the other sections of Los Angeles, the demand for "justice and peace" among the residents was nearly universally articulated.

The local President of the Watts Branch of the NAACP is 72 years old. It was a great sight to witness Mr. Davis Rodgers as a senior citizen gain the ongoing confidence of the thousands of young residents who live in the

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## POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

### "POLITICAL POTPOURRI"

#### NORTH TOWN

People in North Las Vegas who track the political trends in that city, are beginning to discuss more seriously the political possibility of having an African-American majority on it's city council. Most political insiders think that with the candidates running at large in this race, John Rhodes has a good shot.

The feelings seem to be that councilman Theron Goynes will retain his seat with very few problems, still leaving enough for Rhodes to maintain his nine-hundred plus that he attained in the May primary. Combine that with an expected split between Maynard and Hardy, along with the intense pavement pounding Rhodes has been doing since the primary, also this race could prove interesting.

#### HE SAY, SHE SAY

Let's take a good look back to the several weeks just prior to the "Rodney King verdict." Let's dissect for a moment some of the things that were done that had the objective of preventing an uprising or a so-called riot. It was pleasantly interesting to see all of the valley come together and each play their role in helping to stop any possible violence.

Most bases were covered including pleas from church pulpits, the PR campaign of "All Of Us Together," the grass roots focus of "Community Peace," special programming on KCEP, and the list goes on and on. Every possible idea that came up to promote calmness, was explored. However, one of the most interesting tactics that was used by local government officials in cities such as Los Angeles as well as here in Clark County, was the "Rumor Control Hotline."

The fact that rumor control was a major concern of government policy makers proved that they understood how damaging unfounded and baseless rumors can be to a community's positiveness. And as it turned out, I don't have to remind anybody how in fact, some of the most outlandish rumors floated throughout the time leading up to the court decision. There was even a rumor floating around a week or so before the actual verdict, that the verdict came in not guilty. That of course was untrue. There was even some police uniforms supposedly stolen from a dry cleaners by gang members. Untrue again.

What we in the African-American community should learn from this is how damaging rumors can be to positive prog-

ress for our neighborhoods. And all the small-minded, jealous, insecure backbiting toms that are doing it should be dealt with. It remains true that, those who can, do, and those who can't, criticize.

There is a lot of work to be done and we should use our energy to work toward the positive instead of living in lowly mess. There comes a time when you would think that they would realize that those who gossip to you, sometimes gossip about you. Many of these people are too insecure to do anything but talk; true Monday morning arm chair quarterbacks. Not realizing, that what they say about someone else is really saying a lot more about themselves. Give it up.

#### HATS OFF

Hats off to Las Vegas City Councilman Frank Hawkins for being awarded the Civil Libertarian of the Year by the American Civil Liberties Union. The active councilman was chosen by the group for his work in economic development, the youth and a number of other issues.

Hats off to the District Court Judge Lee Gates and wife Yvonne Gates who are the proud parents of a new baby girl.

Hats off to Booker Burney Jr. who recently won a national



Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

essay contest. The UNR student will receive, along with a cash prize, a free trip to Africa for two this summer. Burney has chosen his dad, Burney Sr., to tag along with him. Burney Sr., owner of Hair Unlimited is very excited and proud.

Hats off to Ameka Coleman who on last week graduated from Southern University in Baton Rouge. Ameka is the daughter of Delois and Charles Sawyer.

Hats off to the Doolittle Tourtorial Program who has just received national recognition for it's work in youth academic assistance. The Doolittle program was one of the eleven chosen nationally, and will be recognized in Washington D.C. this upcoming July.

#### PRIME 6

An awful lot of work has been done for many years to achieve parity in education in local public schools. It would be criminal at this point for us to fall asleep right at the verge of the new Prime 6 program. Don't wait until the week before school to start in the fall before you find out yourself what's happening. Contact the Prime 6 office now!

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On May 8, 1993, the City of Las Vegas, Nevada received a jolt beyond the measurements of the Richter Scale. No, it was not an earthquake; it was the torchlight of truth coming from the national assistant of the Honorable Louis Farrakhan. Minister Khallid Abdul Muhammad spoke to an enthusiastic crowd of five-hundred at the Doolittle Recreation Center, located in the heart of the West Las Vegas Black Community.

Minister Khallid came to Las Vegas at the invitation of Minister Alfred Muhammad and the

believers of Muhammad Mosque #75. Despite the fact that on the day of the event, a typical Las Vegas weekend, consisting of a mega-buck championship fight and the ever popular Deaf Comedy Jam Concert, Minister Khallid's lecture achieved much more than Showtime or Marquee Magic. Minister Khallid held the audience rapt attention lecturing on the topic of Malcolm X, the man and his message, his mentor and his murder. He spoke on the U.S. Government sponsored Cointel-Pro Program

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